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The unique aspect of this invention is that the heat treatment process on the workpiece in a continuous and longitudinal manner. This is contrasted with the prior art method, wherein the heat treatment process is performed in an essentially static condition relative to the workpiece. In other words, although it is known to perform a heat treatment process, such as a retrogression heat treatment process, on a closed channel structural member, either in whole or in part, it is not known to perform such a heat treatment process in a continuous and longitudinal manner, such as shown in the drawings and discussed in the specification.

→ Regarding Claim 3, the Examiner stated that the claimed step of "moving the workpiece through an inductive heating coil and a quenching ring" was inherent in the admitted prior art. This statement is respectfully traversed. As mentioned above, the claimed heat treatment process is performed in a continuous and longitudinal manner, whereas the heat treatment process of the prior art is performed in an essentially static condition relative to the workpiece. Thus, the claimed movement of the workpiece through an inductive heating coil and a quenching ring is not disclosed in the admitted prior art. Similarly, the other claims (most of which discuss specific embodiments for performing the claimed method) are neither shown nor suggested in the admitted prior art.

In view of the amendments and above remarks, it is believed that the application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, an early Notice Of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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